

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: ITALIAN REACTIONS TO NOBEL PRIZE AWARD TO SAKHAROV

1. THE AWARDED OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE TO SOVIET DISSIDENT ANDREY SAKHAROV RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN THE ITALIAN PRESS. WHILE EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS THUS FAR BEEN LACKING, THE MANNER IN WHICH THE STORY WAS POSITIONED IN INDIVIDUAL NEWSPAPERS PROVIDES AN INDICATION OF THEIR ATTITUDES DOWARD THE AWARD COMMITTEE'S DECISION.

2. CENTER AND CENTER-LEFT PRESS (IL TEMPO, LA NAZIONE, CORRIERE DELLA SERA, AND LASTAMPA) COVERED AWARD AS FRONT-PAGE NEWS. LEFTIST PRESS (PLUS SOCIALIST DAILY AVANTI) RELEGATED NEWS TO INSIDE OR BACK PAGE.

3. COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY L'UNITA APPENDED A BRIEF COMMENT TO BRIEF FACTUAL NEWS REPORT ON THE AWARD. L'UNITA CALLED THE AWARD "A GESTURE WHICH HAS A CLEAR POLITICAL MEANING" AND SAID THAT THE DECISION OF THE AWARD COMMITTEE "QUESTIONS THE MOTIVATION OF THE CURRENT DETENTE PROCESS AND OPENLY ATTACKS THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE WHICH WAS AN IMPORTANT, ALTHOUGH NOT FINAL, LEG OF DETENTE". ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) CONTROLLED PAESE SERA TOOK A SIMILAR LINE.

4. COMMENT: THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR SACHAROV PRESENTS THE PCI

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WITH JUST THE TYPE OF DILEMMA THE PARTY WOULD PREFER TO AVOID,

I.E., A CHOICE BETWEEN ITS FAITHFULNESS TO THE SOVIETS AND
THE NEED TO ASSERT ITS AUTONOMY. IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE,
THE PCI HAS ELECTED TO CRITICIZE THE AWARD TO SAKHAROV THUS
REFRAINING FROM CREATING AN IRRITANT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE
SOVIETS OVER A SUBJECT WHICH IT BELIEVES TO HAVE MINIMUM
IMPACT ON THE ITALIAN POPULACE. VOLPE

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